

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I know we are about to vote, and I will speak further at another time about Senator UDALL, but I just want to tell him what I told you—all of you—what I said to him when he finished speaking: In my 46 years here, it is one of the finest and most moving, heartfelt, honest speeches I have heard. I have also sent a note, I say to Senator UDALL, to Jill Udall to tell her how great you are, but I think she probably knew it. But I will speak further at another time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my brief remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I want to say a few words about leadership. When I think of the word “leadership,” I think of TOM UDALL.

Leaders are humble, not haughty. Leaders have the heart of a servant. They realize that our job is to serve, not to be served. Leaders have the courage to stay in step when everyone else is marching to the wrong tune. Leaders unite, not divide. They build bridges, not laws.

Leaders surround themselves with the very best people they can find. When the team does well, the leader gives the credit to the team. When the team falls short, the leader takes the blame.

The best leaders among us realize they don’t build themselves up by tearing other people down. Leaders are aspirational. They appeal to our better angels.

Camus—a Frenchman—used to say that leaders are purveyors of hope. Leaders seek to do what is right, not what is easy or expedient but what is right.

Leaders embrace the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way they want to be treated. The Golden Rule is in every major religion on the planet. He embodies it.

Leaders believe that we should pursue excellence in everything we do. If it isn’t perfect, let’s make it better. And when a leader knows that he or she is right, they just won’t give up. They don’t give up.

Those are the qualities that we all admire in leaders. To be totally honest, I fall short on a number of them. And I guess if we are all truthful, we would all say the same thing.

He doesn’t fall short on any of them. TOM UDALL is the personification of what a leader should be and a friend as well.

I just want to say thanks to his parents for raising him, bringing him into the world, and putting him on the right path, giving us a chance to serve with him.

I also thank Jill, his wife, for being just a terrific partner with him. When

we were stuck on TSCA—the Toxic Substance Control Act—she came to the hearings in the committee. He was no longer on the committee, but she came there, and everybody could see on her face that we better get this right or we were in trouble.

The reason we had to pass the Toxic Substance Control Act is that the Federal law that we passed a quarter century ago before didn’t work, and every other State stepped in and decided to have their own State version. It was a patchwork quilt. It just didn’t work. He pointed it out and made it happen, made a change, and I just will always be grateful for that.

The other thing I want to say is that he is a friend. I think if you talk to anybody here, they would say that he is a friend. I don’t care if you are a Republican or a Democrat; he is a friend.

My wife and I and our sons, Christopher and Ben, had the opportunity at the end of an Aspen Institute seminar in Tanzania, which was just an incredible experience, to stay for 4 or 5 days afterward and just travel throughout, go on a safari, and have a chance to see amazing things—amazing things. When it was all over, we went back to the airport in Tanzania, the Kilimanjaro airport, to catch a flight back to the States. I will never forget. Our son Ben, who is our younger son, said to his mom and dad and his older brother: That was the best vacation we have ever had.

We talk about things we share with one another, but that is one that is especially close to my heart.

Godspeed. God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Nathan A. Simington, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2019.

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Joni Ernst, John Barrasso, Tim Scott, Lamar Alexander, Pat Roberts, Kevin Cramer, Shelley Moore Capito, Lindsey Graham, John Thune, Marco Rubio, Mike Crapo, Todd Young, Thom Tillis, Marsha Blackburn, Steve Daines.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Nathan A. Simington, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of

five years from July 1, 2019, shall be brought it a close?

The yeas are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 255 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Paul	

#### NAYS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

#### NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:48 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

#### FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, thank you to the people of Colorado for this incredible honor that you have lent to me these last 6 years to serve you in the U.S. Senate.

Thank you to my family—Jaime, Alyson, Caitlyn, Thatcher, to Mom and Dad and Lisa—who supported me in this last decade of service with your love and sacrifice, through missed ball games and lost teeth, school concerts and junior high dances, sore throats and first moments.

Thank you to my incredible staff, many in the Chamber today, who are in Colorado and Washington, who made so many great things happen and whose difference will be felt for generations to come. You leave a mark on the country far beyond the etching of a signature on a desk on the floor.

Thank you to my colleagues and to Senator BENNET for the honor of serving along your side and for your commitment to our Nation—and to the Capitol Police, the staff, to the support staff in the Senate who make it all possible.

But above all, and most importantly, thank you to this great and extraordinary Nation for all that it means and represents—the hope and optimism that for over two centuries has led people around the globe to give up everything they have just to be here; to be a part of this Nation, to then turn around and fight for it through political strife and pandemics; to go to war to save the Union; to know how lucky and blessed that we are that out of all of the billions of people through the thousands of years of human history, we have had the privilege of being here in this place at this point to be a part of it.

There has been a lot of coverage in the news lately about how the pollsters got it wrong. But one thing they seem to get right—and it won't come as a shock to my colleagues on the floor: Congress is about as popular as a Rocky Mountain oyster in a bullpen.

We have been, together, able to do many good things, and I hope that we can use those successes to drive even more successes and show the American people that faith in this institution is actually well deserved.

Over the last 6 years I have worked hard to pass the first-ever mandatory sanctions on Kim Jong Un and North Korea to denuclearize that regime. It was an honor to work with Senator MENENDEZ throughout this process.

Senator MARKEY and I led the passage of the first-ever comprehensive strategy for a free and open Indo-Pacific, the Asia Reassurance Initiative.

GARY PETERS, along with LAMAR ALEXANDER and me, led the reauthorization of the America Competes legislation to keep the United States competitive in science and engineering, to get more women and minorities into the STEM fields, and to advance our scientific research and discoveries.

The 988 suicide prevention bill that TAMMY BALDWIN and I were able to pass into law represents the first bill in American history to pass the Senate and House unanimously with LGBTQ-specific language. This bill will save lives.

I was honored to help move the Bureau of Land Management headquarters to Colorado and to finally get funding for the construction of the Arkansas Valley Conduit, and I helped lead the passage of legislation to complete our VA hospital in Colorado, to advance our cybersecurity, and to foster our relationships with Taiwan, South Korea, and beyond.

And it was an honor of my time in the Senate to work with LAMAR and Senators MANCHIN, CANTWELL, HEINRICH, WARNER, KING, PORTMAN, DAINES, and BURR on the Great American Outdoors Act, the holy grail of conservation legislation.

In my first remarks on the Senate floor, I spoke about how no matter where across Colorado's four corners that you live—or across this great Nation—we all hope for the same thing for our children: to live in a loving home that values every citizen; that they learn the value of hard work and perseverance; where hard work is met with merited reward; that they find a nation of liberty and freedom that they help make a little bit more free and a little bit more perfect. All of us here in the Senate, the American people—all of us—are responsible for the starting point that we hand off to the next generation, and we have a moral obligation to make it the best starting point possible.

The accomplishments that we have had together truly have helped create more opportunity for the next generation, and the work that we continue to do to get through this pandemic together will ensure that the next generation can indeed take advantage of those accomplishments and that the starting point for them is better than the generation past despite the struggles of today. You know, in Sunday school we learned an important lesson about this—that struggles and tribulation produce perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

And since that very first speech that I gave on the Senate floor, I have come to recognize something that all of us—that everyone here—has undoubtedly experienced—that our service to country is filled with moment after moment that gives us that lump in the throat, that brings a tear to our eyes, that fills our hearts with wonder for this Nation.

Perhaps it happened to you when seeing the majesty of the United States Capitol brightly shining in all its glory on a crisp State of the Union Address night or maybe when we hear the passion in the voices of our colleagues as they tell the story of life and struggle and hope for the future. For me, these moments happen every day, and I am sure they do for you as well—just part of the wonder of this Nation and its Capitol.

It was late at night for me nearly 10 years ago when I was leaving the Capitol building. I had walked through the Hall of Columns, and I heard some voices ahead near the door that I was heading toward. When I turned into the

corridor, I saw a Capitol tour guide pointing at a phrase that was painted on the wall. I looked at it and read it too. It was William Jennings Bryan, and painted on the wall were these words: “Our government, conceived in freedom and purchased with blood, can be preserved only by constant vigilance.”

I looked at the group reading it, and there in the center of them all was a young veteran in a wheelchair with bandages around his knees where his legs used to be. The gravity of this place, that moment, and the duty that we owe to this Nation struck hard.

As I walked home, I kept thinking about it—about those words, about that moment, about that veteran, about this Nation and our responsibility. I thought about how that wall was painted with that phrase, but there are others that are blank and empty, spaces that have been left empty so that future generations can fill them in with their history—with new portraits and new phrases and new moments. But no matter the moment in time or the point in history, it is the same patriotic responsibility that we owe to this Chamber—to defend and serve our Nation, her Constitution, and the American people.

George Washington in his Farewell Address said that the name “American” must always exalt the just pride of patriotism. He spoke of our Constitution and how it must be sacredly maintained and that virtue and wisdom must stamp every act. And despite the differences over policy and politics, it is our Union that ought to be considered as a main prop of our liberty, and that love of the one ought to endear us to the preservation of the other.

I believe that is what LAMAR ALEXANDER very eloquently spoke about on this very floor in his farewell just days ago. It is our country and the unity of nation that, despite our differences, will help preserve and will preserve our liberty.

Washington offered his advice in his farewell as an old and affectionate friend—a friend who recognized our obligation to create a better starting point for every new generation.

But how do we heed this advice in a world of viral social media, click bait, and sound bites?

Colorado Senator Bill Armstrong once said that while he was firm in his principles, he was flexible on the details. We all come to this place because of our core values and beliefs about this Nation. Those principles make us who we are. They drive our actions. They drive our debates. But, today, it seems as though we live in a world where tactics are elevated to the same status and importance as principles, and staying true to principle means that the tactics used to achieve that principle are elevated to the same importance as the principle itself. It is always my way or the highway. Senator Armstrong's flexible details would now be derided as violations of principle.

We cannot govern when every tactic and detail is elevated to the level of principle. There is no compromise with this approach. We cannot find ways to bring people together for that unity of nation of which Washington spoke when the test for principles becomes so impossible to pass that only the very factions that he warned against can prevail.

To my staff I often talk about this challenge as being one of the pillar and the paint. The pillars in a building are more than just ornamental. They are structurally necessary to the building itself. The pillars are our principles. They make us who we are. But the paint color—the details—we can figure that out together.

We can respect the pillar and find agreement on the paint. We can hold people's principles in place, respecting those core beliefs that make you who you are, while finding ways to work together to find solutions to common challenges. That is how we pass the test of unity that brings people together, respecting principles while achieving solutions, because not every detail is a principle, and not every principle is a detail, and we need a legislative body that can recognize this. By doing so, we will follow through on the advice of Washington and preserve our liberty with unity of nation.

Too many people have given up on the institutions of their government, and it is my hope that the American people will find this pillar-and-paint approach to be one that can make a difference because if they believe it—they believe that it will—then the American people will make sure their values are reflected in the representatives they elect.

Several years ago, I had the honor of meeting a man named Donald Stratton. He came to my office accompanied by his family and the family of a sailor named Loren Bruner and the family of another sailor, Joe George.

They were looking forward to yet another commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941—79 years ago yesterday. Both Donald Stratton and Loren Bruno were on the USS *Arizona* when it was attacked. Donald Stratton was on one of the ship's towers. He was surrounded by flame and surely believed that he would perish, when out of the chaos of that morning came a rope thrown by a yet-unknown-to-him sailor by the name of Joe George, who was aboard the USS *Vestal*, which was moored next to the USS *Arizona*. This rope saved Donald Stratton's life and several other shipmates.

No one knew their lifeline was thrown to them by Joe George until years later. Once they learned who it was, they spent the rest of their lives fighting to get Joe George honored and recognized by the Navy.

I was honored to be a part of that effort, and, finally, on December 7, 2017, led by Donald Stratton and the *Arizona*'s remaining few, Joe George re-

ceived the Bronze Star with "V" device for valor aboard the USS *Arizona* Memorial, with Donald Stratton attending one last time. He was fighting for this country and his countrymen to the very end.

When I asked him how he did it, how he survived the attack and those flames and got back into the fight for this Nation, he chuckled, he laughed, and he gave me an answer that I truly didn't see coming at all. He said: "Well, Cory, everybody has to be somewhere."

Everybody has to be somewhere. He is right. We are here in the U.S. Senate. Most of you will still be here next Congress. Don't waste this opportunity to be who this Nation needs you to be at this moment of great challenge, to recognize the difference between the paint and the pillar, to know the difference between a principle and a tactic, where to take a stand and where to stand together, to bring a nation together in unity for the preservation of liberty, to recognize that to be American carries with it the greatness of a nation forged by fight and fire, tempered by wisdom, and made great by men, like Donald Stratton, who recognized that their duty and their time didn't just end with the last calling of the roll. Everybody has to be somewhere. Make it count for this Nation that you are here.

If you go into any of my offices, you will see on the wall my mission statement, and it ends with this:

We represent a State where the words to "America the Beautiful" were written—we will always look up to the Rocky Mountain horizon in the work that we do and remind ourselves that only through our actions will God continue to shed his grace on our great nation.

Ours is a Nation founded on the optimism that no generation waits for the next to be told where to go. It is the great American horizon that compels us to continue to reach ahead, to rise, to achieve, and to believe in America.

Ten years ago I sat on the floor of the United States House of Representatives as we prepared—some of my colleagues here with me—to be sworn into the 112th Congress. I watched with our daughter Alyson patiently sitting by my side as the peaceful transition of power took place—the hallmark of our Republic. As the most powerful constitutionally prescribed Member of the Congress, the Speaker of the House gave the gavel to a newly elected Speaker without gunshot or war, peacefully transitioning to a new majority.

Today, I speak on the Senate floor with a heart of gratitude. As I leave, with a new Congress set to begin, I go home not because of or due to the threat of violence or revolution but because of the same constitutional governance that has given this country over two centuries of strength and certainty—a jewel among nations, exceptionally blessed by God.

It has been a privilege to serve with you for this country. We owe every

man, woman, and child that lives here our commitment to them to not pass on to the next generation a nation that is in decline or retreat but a nation that rises, a nation that reminds itself that ours is a country worth fighting for, a nation that believes in itself, because when you believe in America, when you believe in this country, the world has not seen anything yet.

Thank you to my colleagues. Thank you for the honor of serving with you.

And, Madam President, this kid from Yuma yields the floor.

(Applause. Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I want to take just a few minutes to speak about my colleague from Colorado, Senator CORY Gardner—a kid from Yuma, as he described himself a minute ago—and to recognize the work that we have done for our State together in a bipartisan way.

Over the past 6 years, one of the most common and sometimes surprising questions I have gotten from reporters and constituents was: How is your relationship with Senator GARDNER? Can you work together with Senator GARDNER?

It is really an innocent question, but I have come to think about it as a reflection of the sad state of our politics and the Senate for the moment, in particular. Behind the question is the assumption that because CORY is a Republican and I am a Democrat we, somehow, can't work together for the benefit of our State. That hasn't been the case, far from it.

Sometimes he would say and sometimes I would say that we felt like there were times when we were working together better than States that were represented by two people from the same political party.

In this Congress, Colorado is 1 of just 10 States that isn't represented by Senators from the same party. Think about that—just 1 of 10 States with a split caucus in this body, just 10 out of 50. You would think it would be a lot higher, given how evenly divided we are as a country.

A lot has been written about the divide in our country today, and one of the divides is the rural-urban divide in America, which reporters like to talk about. In our delegation, CORY and I have tried to bridge that and, I have to say, it has helped a lot that CORY was born and raised in Yuma, CO, a town on the Eastern Plains with a population of 3,500 people, roughly. It is the place where CORY grew up, working in his parents' implement dealership—the red tractors, not the green tractors—where community tradition and ties to the land, like a lot of places in our State, run very, very deep; a place where rush hour means getting behind a tractor.

It is a beautiful place, and CORY was kind enough to invite me to Yuma after he was elected. During that visit we made a commitment to work together despite our political differences,

which we certainly have, and that is exactly what we have tried to do over the past 6 years. We worked together on legislation to ban Members of Congress from becoming lobbyists. I tell my colleagues today that I think there would be no bill we could pass that would do more to lift the reputation of this body than that one. Over half the people who leave here don't retire but become lobbyists. It was hard to find somebody to cosponsor that legislation. CORY saw the benefit of it, and we have been fighting for it ever since.

We wrote bipartisan legislation to prevent government shutdowns; to make our energy grid more resilient; to secure funding, as CORY mentioned, for the Arkansas Valley Conduit, a critical water project that Washington has been promising Colorado since John F. Kennedy came to Pueblo, when he was President.

We fought to hold the VA accountable to care for our veterans across the Rocky Mountain region. With CORY's leadership, we fought to keep the U.S. Space Command in Colorado. We partnered to fund critical improvements to our infrastructure, from I-25 along the Front Range to the South-west Chief.

And just last week, Senator COLLINS, 127 years after Colorado became the first State to grant women the vote by popular referendum and 100 years after ratification of the 19th Amendment, the Senate passed our bill to install America's first outdoor monument honoring the women's suffrage movement here in Washington, DC.

That was typical of the legislation that we carried together, because the idea actually came from Fort Collins, CO. It didn't come from Washington, DC. So many of the best ideas that we worked on together came from Colorado. CORY is a student of Colorado history and the country's history, and he understands the significance of a bill like that.

Over the years we have worked together late into the night to help communities across our State get back on their feet after devastating floods, wildfires, the Gold King Mine spill of 2015, and now the COVID-19 pandemic, where CORY's leadership was absolutely essential.

I could go on all afternoon.

The point is, even though CORY and I have had plenty of differences over the years, there is a real record of bipartisan accomplishment for our State, and one of the reasons for that is because, whatever our differences on policy, I have never for a moment doubted CORY's commitment to serving the interests of Colorado and his genuine appreciation for what makes us the best State in America.

In a lot of ways, CORY has embodied many of our State's best qualities. We are a young and restless State, and CORY has represented it always with energy and with drive. Agree with him or not, you can't say he hasn't worked hard every single second that he has been here.

You have probably also heard that Colorado has 300 days of sunshine a

year. As it turns out, so does CORY Gardner. It is probably why my staff always told me to smile more at our events together. He has been a consistent source of warmth and optimism in a body desperate for both. He has brought a lot more of that to the Chamber than I have, and I have been trying to make up for it now that he won't be here this year.

All of that is to say that I have been extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with Senator GARDNER over the past 6 years to do a lot of work together for our State.

On a personal level, I would like to say to his family that I also want to say how much I appreciated the consistent kindness CORY and Jaime have shown to me and my family, even at moments that have been difficult ones for them.

My staff are also deeply grateful for the close collaboration with CORY's team over the years, and I want to thank them for their extraordinary work.

I know there are a lot of folks today who have things to say about my colleague from Colorado. So let me just end with this. Serving in this body, as he said, is an enormous privilege, but as everyone here knows, it does not come without a cost, especially for a parent with young children. I have watched CORY, as his kids have begun to grow up, put his family first at all times and our State a close second behind them. To watch him get on a plane, as I did this week, with his family and the care and attention he paid them is a reminder to me—and has been over the last 10 years—of what is really most important.

I will miss our work together, but I suspect Senator GARDNER is not done with his contribution to the country, to the State of Colorado, and to his community, and I look forward to continuing our work together in whatever capacity he ends up choosing to serve. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, CORY Gardner and I first met in 2011, when he became the first alumnus of the United States Senate Youth Program to be sworn into the House of Representatives. As the first Senate Youth Program delegate elected to the U.S. Senate, I felt an immediate connection to this new Member of Congress from Colorado. One year, both of us had the privilege of addressing the student delegates to this wonderful program that had made such a difference in the lives of both of us.

Since he joined the Senate 6 years ago, CORY has demonstrated his leadership on many issues which we have heard described today. His upbeat personality and his commitment to compromise, to solutions, and to bipartisanship have had a positive influence on this Chamber. As the renowned columnist George Will once called CORY, he is "a human beam of sunshine." I am sure that is the phrase that was going through the mind of his colleague from Colorado.

His approach to legislating has indeed been enlightening, but it has been his positive approach to every problem that we encounter, his upbeat personality, his wonderful smiles, and his problem-solving devotion to America and to his State that have distinguished him.

CORY's landmark achievement, which he discussed today, is the Great American Outdoors Act. I was proud to cosponsor his legislation. This historic bill, at long last, fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provides funding to address significant parts of the multi-billion-dollar national parks maintenance backlog. The Great American Outdoors Act will help to ensure that both current and future generations can enjoy the pristine beauty of our natural treasures in Colorado, in the great State of Maine, and throughout our country. CORY's hard work to bridge the partisan divide and secure support from both sides of the aisle leave a lasting legacy that the American people will cherish. I would note that he never gave up in his pursuit of seeing this landmark legislation signed into law.

That is typical of the approach that CORY takes. He doesn't give up. He persists. But he does so in such a delightful way—always in search of a solution—that it is very difficult for his colleagues to ever say no to him.

CORY's commitment to environmental stewardship extends from the great outdoors to the frontier of technology to advance the development and deployment of energy from renewable, sustainable, and clean energy sources.

CORY, as was mentioned by Senator BENNET, has also been a champion for those who have served our Nation in uniform. In 2017, a troubling GAO report revealed an unacceptable trend of VA facilities failing to report healthcare providers who made major medical errors to the boards responsible for tracking dangerous practitioners, or, in some cases, revoking or suspending their licenses. As a result, these practitioners can go into private practice from their work at the VA or simply move across State lines without disclosing prior performance problems to either patients or State regulators.

To solve this serious problem, CORY introduced the Department of Veterans Affairs Provider Accountability Act. His bill, which passed the Senate unanimously, helps to protect patients by requiring the VA to disclose major errors committed by its medical providers.

Time and again, I have seen CORY put into practice the values that the Senate Youth Program imparts to high school students—a deep respect for our enduring system of government, a dedication to public service, and a willingness to work in a bipartisan spirit to get the job done.

It has been such an honor and a great joy to serve with CORY in the U.S. Senate. I am certain he will continue to serve his State and his country, and I wish him and his family all the best. Thank you, CORY, for all you have done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, well, some farewell speeches are different than others. I think this farewell speech should very much be just a momentary pause for us to think about what comes next.

CORY Gardner is incredibly accomplished. He has been good for the Senate. He has been great with his colleagues, and he has been, beyond that, even more constantly focused on Colorado.

He has become, for me, a valued personal friend. Our families, for whatever reason, from almost the first time we spent any time together, sort of gravitated toward each other and continued to do things together. And why not? Jaime is great. CORY is that beam of sunshine that Senator BENNET and Senator COLLINS both have talked about, 365 days a year. He is optimistic. He is determined. He is realistic. Those are all three pretty doggone good characteristics for a successful legislator. He also continues to figure out, OK, that didn't work and what can we do that makes that work in some other way, to be determined to get the job done, to be realistic about how an obstacle can be in the way and understand how to come together and make all those things work.

Now, Senator COLLINS, particularly, mentioned that long list of truly great legislative fights that CORY has successfully led in. One of them we worked together on has been the effort to be sure that people who weren't able to get broadband—people in rural areas and people in urban areas who maybe had broadband but couldn't afford it. By the way, I think that is the next big fight about broadband. It is not just accessibility but also, even though it may be running right by where you live, how do we work in ways that assure you are part of it.

In little towns like I grew up in or CORY grew up in, it is the difference in whether you can compete or not. We have seen that so dramatically in the last few months, where kids going to school without the ability to have that access were dramatically hampered by that. People who couldn't use broadband for mental health or telehealth and people who just couldn't live where they prefer to live because they didn't have the connectedness they need to have are hampered by that. That is a fight that CORY has been in the middle of, and he understood it only maybe as you would understand it if half of your State is vertical and the other half is horizontal. You have got to figure out how to get the connectedness you would like to have.

The second century of the National Park System, one of the truly great American miracles, will be dramatically different than it would have been otherwise because of the legislation that CORY led on. In thinking about the future of that system and thinking about the future of the country, I remember one of the first stories I heard CORY tell, after he got here, in a small group of people. I think his son Thatcher was headed out the door that he wasn't supposed to be going out, and CORY said: That reminds me of one of my speeches late in the campaign. I was done. I thought we were all done. I look around, and Thatcher's shoes are still on the platform, even though Thatcher shouldn't have ever been on the platform.

And as CORY goes back to pick up Thatcher's shoes, he holds them up and says: This is why I am running. This is why I am running—for this little pair of shoes and all the other pairs of shoes that represent the future.

I think CORY has done an incredible job here focusing on not just the present but the future. Frankly, as Senator BENNET said, I am personally interested in seeing what comes next in the future of a person and a family who have so much to offer and are willing to offer it in service to others.

This is a day that I am ready to look and see what the next chapter of the Gardner story looks like and I think it is going to be optimistic and I think CORY will be smiling all the way through it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF NATHAN A. SIMINGTON

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote against the nomination of Nathan Simington to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission.

We definitely want the FCC to focus on commonsense consumer protections, universal broadband, and the survival of our news and local journalism industry as it faces unbelievable and unfair competition and practices by the tech sector, and we also want to make sure that the next President of the United States also gets to choose their member and representation to the FCC.

The Senate has a tradition of confirming Commission nominees in pairs to ensure equality on both sides of the aisle. I think moving this nominee without that democratic paring is contrary to what we have usually operated under in good governance.

Every Member of this body should be concerned about setting a precedent

and what it will mean in the future if we don't have essential consumer protections and oversight in this important institution.

We need high-quality, affordable broadband for the underserved and the unserved. That includes Tribal country.

We need to make sure that we are working hard as a result of the pandemic and for people to understand that broadband is now essential to our healthcare, to being able to work, and certainly to the education of our children. According to the AP, 16 percent of families with children have no access to broadband, and we need to make sure that all students have the tools for distance learning.

We need to make sure that Washingtonians have access to broadband for healthcare centers and clinics and to make sure that their initial contacts can be done online, just to help us in fighting the pandemic.

Especially, we need to preserve a free and open internet that is not divided into haves and have-nots.

The innovation economy is so important to my State, but it is important to the entire United States, and we need to have nominees who will fight for these policies, to get them implemented. That is why it is important that we look at FCC Commissioners.

Mr. Simington was before our Commerce Committee. We had another nominee whom the White House abruptly, unexpectedly pulled from its renomination—Commissioner O'Rielly—just days after the committee reported that nomination to the Senate, allegedly because he spoke his mind and because he did not agree with the President of the United States. Mr. Simington was nominated instead just a few weeks later, coming from NTIA, which asks the FCC to issue rules.

It raises questions in my mind about the White House's choice in Mr. Simington, particularly given these issues as it relates to the FCC and key responsibilities. I have questions about his neutrality and independence on issues before the Commission and about whether he aggressively and actively sought the media attention to personally and explicitly direct pressure onto the FCC. This involvement might sound insignificant or just partisan to some, but it is so important for the FCC to continue to play an important and independent role from the President of the United States.

So I hope we will not pass the Simington nomination. But I am emphasizing to my colleagues that the President will deserve his nominee as well, and I hope our colleagues will move quickly to confirm them once they are nominated.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, I also wanted to take a couple of minutes to discuss action that all of us have been working on on a bipartisan and bicameral basis, and that is the action that has now resulted in the National Defense Authorization Act which we will be taking up